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Consumerism and Control: Archaeological Perspectives on the Harvard College Buttery

Christina J. Hodge

Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, offers a unique setting through which to explore cultural changes within 17th- and 18th-century America, including shifting foodways and consumerisms. Harvard's early leaders constructed their collegiate community by controlling many aspects of scholars' lives, including their eating, drinking, and purchasing practices. Between 1650 and 1800, the college operated the "Buttery," a commissary where students supplemented meager institutional meals by purchasing snacks and sundries. As a marketplace, the buttery organized material practices of buying and selling as people and things flowed through it. Archaeological and documentary evidence reveals how college officials attempted to regulate, but lagged behind, improvisational student consumerisms. The buttery market functioned both as a technology of social control and an opportunity for individual agency, providing broader lessons for consumer studies.

Le Collège de Harvard à Cambridge, Massachusetts, fournit un contexte unique pour étudier les changements culturels américains des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, incluant les changements dans les habitudes alimentaires et le consumérisme. Les premiers dirigeants de Harvard ont construit leur communauté collégiale en contrôlant plusieurs aspects de la vie des érudits, y compris leurs façons de manger et de boire, et leurs pratiques d'achat. Entre 1650 et 1800, le Collège a exploité le Buttery, une cantine où les étudiants pouvaient compléter leurs maigres repas institutionnels en achetant des collations et des articles divers. Comme un marché, le Buttery a organisé des pratiques d'achat et de vente suivant les allées et venues du matériel et des consommateurs. Des preuves archéologiques et documentaires révèlent comment les dirigeants du Collège ont tenté de réglementer, mais avec du retard, le consumérisme improvisé des étudiants. Le marché Buttery a servi de technologie de contrôle social et d'opportunité d'expression individuelle, fournissant de grandes leçons en ce qui a trait aux études de consommation.

Harvard's Colonial Buttery

Introduction

Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, offers a unique setting through which to explore cultural changes within early America, including shifting foodways and consumerisms. From Harvard's founding in 1636, the Harvard Corporation and Board of Overseers sought to create a collegiate community by controlling scholars' everyday lives. In the colonial period, strict schedules within a purpose-built environment regulated sleeping, study, recreation, eating, praying, learning, and socializing (to greater and lesser extents) (Hodge 2013). Students living in this institutional community experienced their world as segmented in space and time (Casella 2010: 93), its contours defined through codependent ideological, material, and behavioral structures.

One of the most heavily regulated, and subsequently fraught, arenas of daily practice was dining. In its great hall, Harvard fed student

bodies at shared meals called "Commons," paid for as part of general tuition. Commons was mandatory and fundamental to the collegiate experience to the point that "coming into Commons" was synonymous with matriculation and community membership (Hodge 2013: 223). Despite its importance to student life, however, food at commons was consistently marginal and often criticized by students who were, by turns or all at once, hungry, disgusted, and bored (Peirce 1833; Morison 1935, 2001; Bevis 1936). Like English colleges before it, Harvard also operated a "Buttery": a commissary where students paid extra for bread, cheese, beer, and other food and drink to supplement institutional provisions. These purchases were called "Sizings." Young men also sometimes risked punishment to procure prohibited drink and comestibles from the surrounding town.

This study interrogates the role of the college buttery during the 17th and 18th centuries. Integrated forces of supply and demand are sometimes called "the market"—an abstract economic process operating at a suprahuman

scale that is, sometimes, assumed to behave according to rational, predictable principles. Rather than attempting to track market forces at Harvard's buttery, I suggest the commissary is best approached as "a market": a location of human-scale buying and selling. As sites of cultural reproduction, colonial markets structured relations of people and things within an agreed upon—but never static—system. Market practices simultaneously reflected and reshaped the system and its participants. Harvard's market was a site of what Arjun Appadurai (1986: 5) calls "the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context." The buttery was thus a node—a place of aggregation, intersection, and distribution—that reveals the material, human, and social contexts of early modern Harvard College, particularly those surrounding foodways and power.

At early Harvard, food and drink were anxiously regulated throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Whether Puritan rule or humanist, English colony or American state, food was "a never-failing source of uneasiness and disturbance" (Hall 1851: 71). Young men broke and bent rules, rebelling en masse when they believed the college failed to live up to its social contract, and tested, in more intimate ways, the limits of their own desires and growing authority (Peirce 1833; Hall 1851; Morison 1935, 2001; Bevis 1936). Their tactics included: sneaking forbidden liquors onto campus; buying more kinds of food and drink from the buttery than were listed in the College Laws; bringing desirable foodstuffs not sold on campus, like tea and coffee, from home; stealing geese from Cambridge Common; during commencement festivities, transforming licit goods (like wine and cake) into illicit by eating and drinking more than the faculty deemed appropriate; presenting parental notes excusing them from commons when they could no longer stomach the fare; dining illegally in town; repurposing dreadfully hard puddings into footballs; and collectively walking out in protest, most famously during the Butter Rebellion of 1766 (an episode in which more than one historian finds a "Revolutionary" fervor).

Harvard thus provides a rich case study for a situated approach to food-related consumerisms as relational, material, and contested. The mid-

17th through late 18th century offers robust documentary evidence of these processes, including surviving College Laws and Orders, the college butler's account book, and student recollections. These sources are coeval with archaeological midden fills, the residues of everyday consumer practices at the Anglo-American colonies' first college. Documentary and archaeological archives work together to illuminate the student retail-scape and, through it, materialities of individual and institutional authority.

Interpretive Frameworks

The goal of this study is to define material mechanisms through which a consumer system focused on food and drink inculcated values and shaped hierarchies at early Harvard, a powerful center of intellectual capital and cultural reproduction throughout the 17th and 18th centuries (and beyond). This study takes up Paul Mullins's (2011) challenge to treat consumerism as a social process of identification and empowerment, rather than a rote expression of economic capacity, social position, or supply and demand. A starting point is the notion that, through its participation in social practices, material culture created "affiliation, political influence, and economic power" (Casella 2013: 94). Another is that food, in particular, is a source of power because it is worth money and necessary to life, and because it is expressive, pleasurable, personal, and communal (Ulrich 1984: 94). Food is significant far beyond its role as sustenance. Therefore, foodways are a crucial entrée into modes of social reproduction, not only at domestic sites, but also at institutional sites like colonial Harvard.

Appadurai argues that consumer goods, including food and drink, embody (or materialize) values subjectively assigned to them. That is, "objects circulate in different *regimes of value* in space and time" in a "politically mediated process" (Appadurai 1986: 4, 6). Through archival residues of things in motion, these regimes are accessible to the archaeologist, ethnographer, and historian. Chasing the nuances of exchange at the Harvard Buttery provides a more convincing reconstruction of historical experience at the school than top-down study of supply and demand. Micro

and macro scales are linked, however, because patterned material and documentary evidence reveals contested power structures and values underlying life at the college, as well as in colonial New England more broadly.

When I use the term “practice” throughout this study, it is in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) “practice theory.” Practice theory asserts that activities in the material world both shape and reflect social structures. These taken-for-granted dispositions are termed “habitus.” Agency exists, but its creative force is restricted within systems that define what individuals can and cannot do. Though deeply inculcated, systems of tacit knowledge shift as improvisations challenge the system’s constructed nature. This study is also informed by Michel de Certeau’s (1988) concern with the habitual practices of the everyday. Certeau (1988: 48) triangulates between the habitus of Bourdieu and the controlling regimes of Michel Foucault (1995), concerning himself with the “minor” practices that work within and alongside normative ideologies of power to create a “polytheism of scattered practices.” Certeau argues that creative improvisation has long-term transformative effects, particularly in contests between institutional strategies of control and individual tactical responses. Individual actions are, therefore, not epiphenomenal, but essential to social reproduction and change. Everyday improvisations are vibrant in the written and wrought archives of Harvard’s colonial buttery. There, student consumers and school authorities worked through issues of affiliation, control, status, and power by directing the flows of their everyday market.

In reconstructing the material practices organized by and structural relationships of power and identity shaped through Harvard’s buttery, this study discovers that the colonial commissary served multiple agendas. Goods flowed onto its shelves and across its hatch as the butler stocked the shelves, and students transported food and drink from shared spaces to private rooms, revealing common and contested regimes of value. The buttery was a technology both of social control and of negotiated consumerism. Harvard’s internal market structured practices, and its history suggests broader directions for future consumer studies.

Archaeological Finds

Introduction

Harvard Yard has hosted many archaeological projects since the late 1970s, including field schools, salvage archaeology, research projects, and combinations of all three (Stubbs et al. 2010). These initiatives have demonstrated that, despite near-ceaseless construction and landscape modification, Harvard enjoys a robust underground archive dating back at least 375 years. Relevant to the analysis of the buttery are three well-dated trash features spanning the 1670s through the 1780s (FIG. 1). Archaeological testing and monitoring in this region of Harvard Yard, while not exhaustive, have yet to identify additional, large trash features from this period. It is therefore believed that the three features considered here represent a substantial portion of community deposition from the late 17th through late 18th centuries. Materials in these middens originated in Harvard’s institutional buildings, which housed the diverse activities of a colonial college: kitchen, buttery, library, hall, museum, storage, studies, and student and tutor chambers.

The 1644 Old College (a.k.a. Harvard Hall I) inaugurated Harvard’s first phase of institutional construction, which was concentrated in the southern, now largely open, area of the Old Yard quadrangle. The Old College’s wooden, sill-on-ground superstructure was in disuse by 1677 and demolished around 1686 (Bunting 1998: 11, 318). During this period, Harvard grew and re-centered itself to the west. The overseers built a series of Georgian brick structures oriented toward Cambridge Common. This second-phase architecture included: the second (1677–1764) and third (1764–present) multipurpose Harvard halls; a new, but short-lived President’s House (1680–1718); the dormitory Old Stoughton Hall (1698–1780); and Massachusetts Hall (1720–present), another, larger dormitory that was built on the site of the former President’s House (Stubbs 1993: 49; Bunting 1998: 16–23, 318) (FIG. 2). Hollis Hall, another dormitory, was built in 1763 outside and to the north of the Massachusetts-Stoughton-Harvard quadrangle, where it stands today. Although predominantly a student community, for eight months during

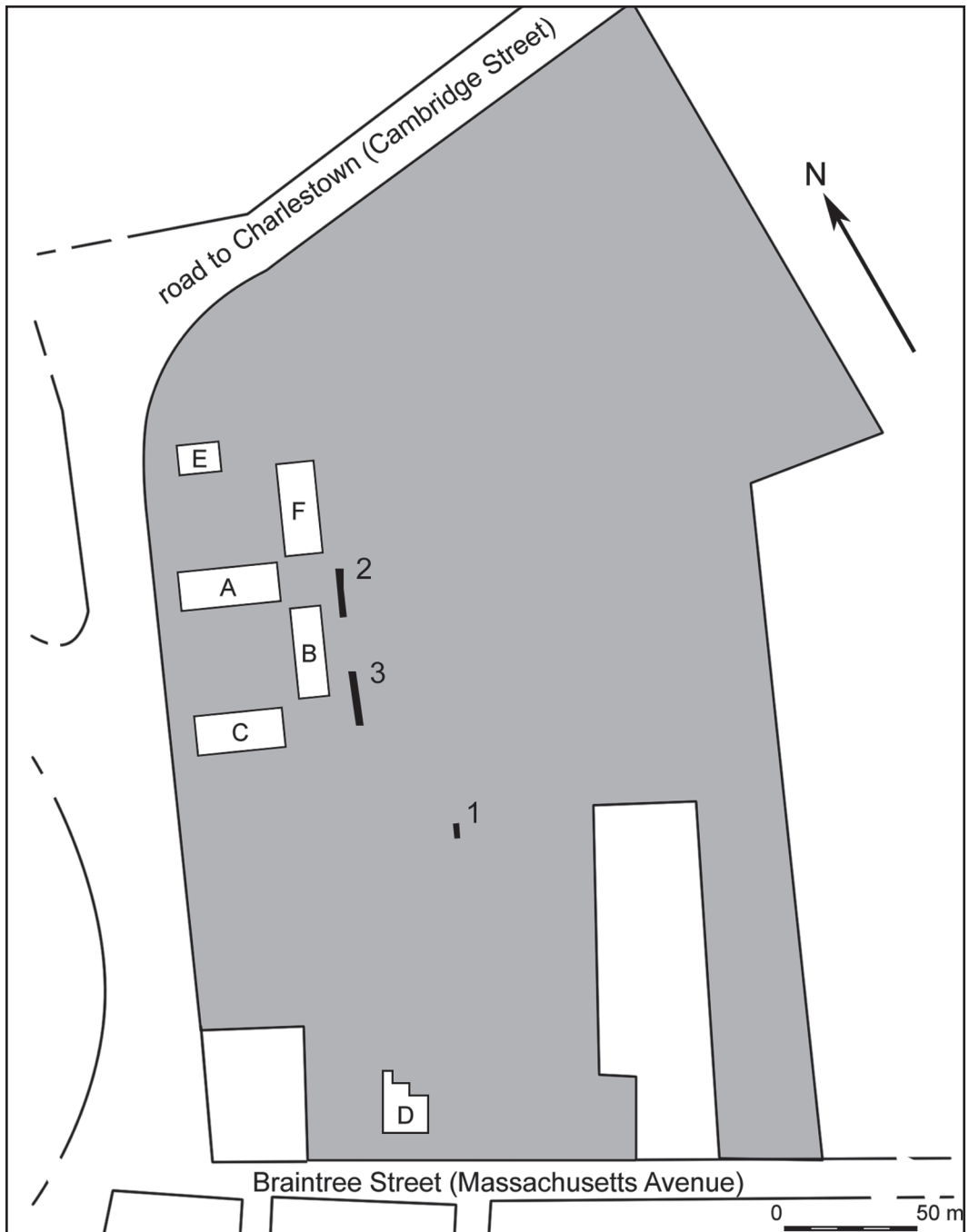


Figure 1. Map of the Old Yard at Harvard University. This map shows the yard ca. 1780. Dates are for Harvard occupation: A = Harvard Hall II (1677–1764) and III (1764–present); B = Old Stoughton Hall (1698–1781); C = Massachusetts Hall (1720–present); D = Wadsworth House (1726–present); E = Holden Chapel (1742–present); F = Hollis Hall (1762–present) (Bunting 1998). Black areas mark the locations of discussed features: 1 = Old College Cellar Fill within the conjectural footprint of the structure; 2 = the midden east of Harvard Hall; 3 = the midden east of Massachusetts Hall. (Figure by author, 2014, after Stubbs [1992: 62, 1993: 48].)

the Revolutionary War (October 1775–May 1776) the college decamped to Concord and American soldiers were billeted in Massachusetts, Old Stoughton, and Hollis halls, as well as in Holden Chapel (a nonresidential building) (Morison 2001: 149–151).

The earliest trash feature evaluated by this paper is from the Old College cellar, but stratigraphic and artifactual evidence dates the fill to between 1677 and ca. 1700, immediately after that building fell out of use and into ruins (Stubbs 1992). A later sheet midden was found near Harvard Hall and to the north of the former Old Stoughton Hall. Its key fill level was deposited while Old Stoughton Hall was standing, based on spatial distribution (Stubbs

1993). It includes no creamware, so dates between 1698 and ca. 1765. The latest of the comparative midden features dates ca. 1765–1785 based on ceramic evidence, just after Harvard Hall II burned and Harvard Hall III was built in its place (Stubbs 1993). It was found at the same depth as the Harvard Hall Midden, but to the south of the Old Stoughton footprint, near Massachusetts Hall. There was no stratigraphic indication that these deposits were ever cleaned out, graded, or emptied (Stubbs 1992, 1993). Together, the sequential Old College Cellar Fill (1677–ca. 1700), Harvard Hall Midden (1698–ca. 1765), and Massachusetts Hall Midden (ca. 1765–1785) provide a diachronic understanding of life



Figure 2. *A Prospect of the Colledges in Cambridge in New England*, engraving attributed to John Harris after William Burgis, 1726 (first state, hand coloring). This easterly view shows (left to right): Harvard Hall II, Old Stoughton Hall, and Massachusetts Hall. The buttery was located in the far right (east) corner of Harvard Hall on the ground floor, adjacent to the kitchen and the hall. (Image courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.)

at colonial Harvard via residues of student consumption (FIG. 3) (TAB. 1). Evidence of dining and drinking is particularly strong.

The Old College Cellar Fill: 1677–ca. 1700

Then-doctoral student John D. Stubbs directed a productive archaeological research initiative at Harvard in the late 1980s, about the time of the 350th anniversary of the school (1992). Among many other significant finds, in

1987 he and his crews located the filled-in cellar from Harvard’s Old College (a.k.a. Harvard Hall I). This structure, completed in 1644, was Harvard’s first institutional building and contained a hall, library and other teaching collections, kitchen, buttery, storage spaces, and student and tutor rooms (Bunting 1998: 318). When the building was abandoned in 1677, the remaining cellar hole was not immediately filled. Archaeological evidence

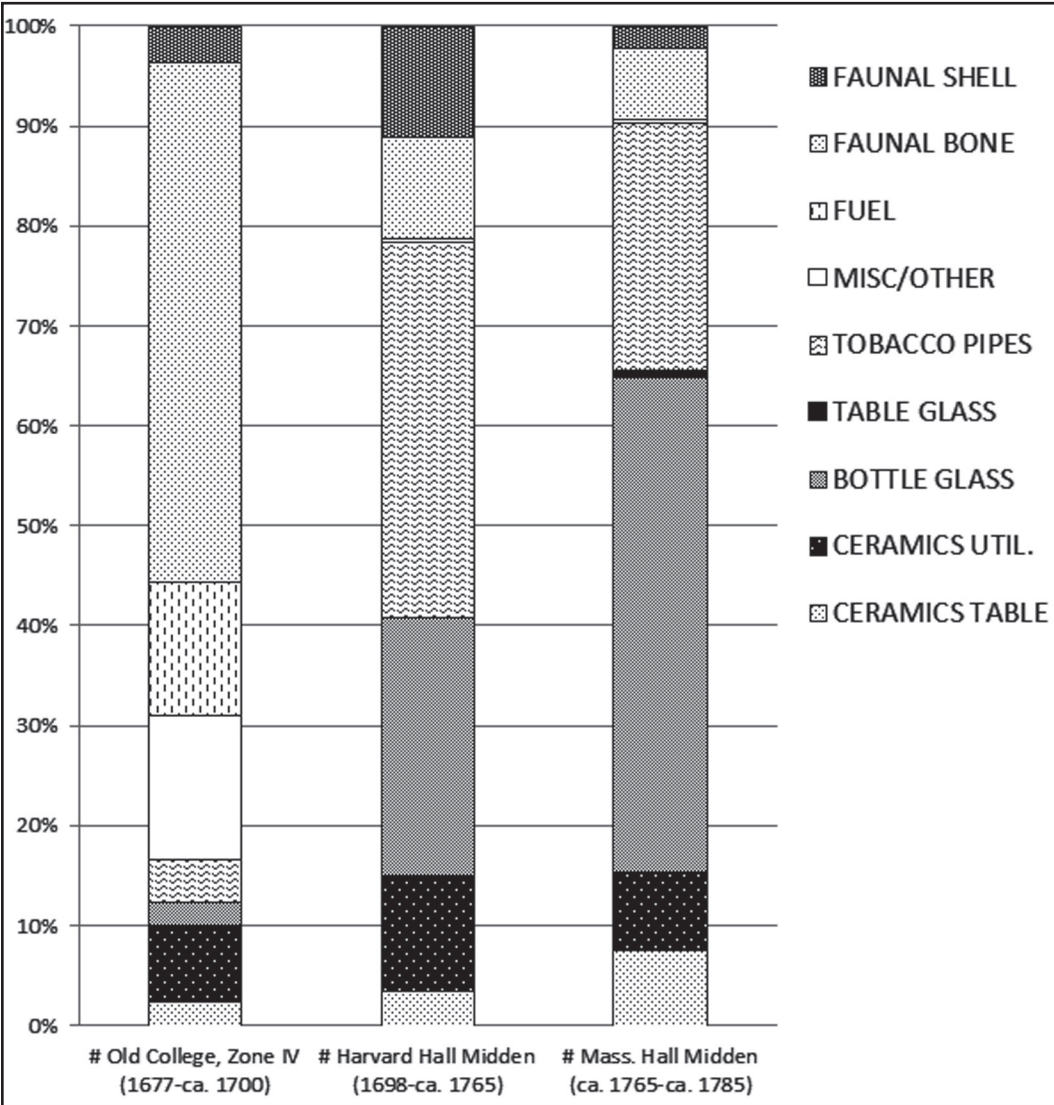


Figure 3. Artifact distributions across the Old College Cellar Fill (1677–ca. 1700), Harvard Hall Midden (1698–ca. 1765), and Massachusetts Hall Midden (ca. 1765–1785). Totals do not include architectural materials, in order to highlight the percentages of other artifact categories; see also Table 1. (Figure by author, 2014.)

Table 1. Artifact totals from the Old College Cellar Fill Zone IV, Harvard Hall Midden, and Massachusetts Hall Midden (except architectural); see also Figure 3.

	# Old College, Zone IV (1677–ca. 1700)	% Old College, Zone IV (1677–ca. 1700)	# Harvard Hall Midden (1698–ca. 1765)	% Harvard Hall Midden (1698–ca. 1765)	# Mass. Hall Midden (ca. 1765–ca. 1785)	% Mass. Hall Midden (ca. 1765–ca. 1785)
Ceramics table	14	2%	70	3%	259	8%
Ceramics util.	48	8%	237	12%	266	8%
Bottle glass	14	2%	535	26%	1686	49%
Table glass	0	0%	0	0%	25	1%
Tobacco pipes	26	4%	774	38%	841	25%
Misc./Other	89	14%	6	0%	12	0%
Fuel	82	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Faunal bone	320	52%	207	10%	243	7%
Faunal shell	22	4%	231	11%	76	2%
Total	615	100%	2060	100%	3408	100%

indicates that generations from 1677 through the 1760s used it as a trash pit (Stubbs 1992: 467; Hodge 2013: 221–222). These materials originated in the second Harvard Hall, which stood 1682–1764. A small percentage may be from the President's House, which stood adjacent to Harvard Hall between 1680 and 1718, but this is unlikely. Excavations at other presidents' homes in a different area of Harvard Yard—pre- and postdating this one—found pit- and sheet-midden features proximate to the structures (Graffam 1981; Gerry 1999). These finds suggest that presidential trash and scholastic trash did not mingle.

The sampled area of the Old College Cellar Fill was approximately 1.5×1.75 m, and 2.25 m deep. Archaeologists recovered over 4,300 artifacts dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. Zone IV of the fill dates from 1677 to ca. 1700 (FIG. 4). Of its 1,752 artifact fragments, most (1,137, 65%) were architectural (Stubbs 1992: 259–260, 284–285). Of the 615 remaining, roughly half were faunal, with mostly utilitarian ceramics, fuel, and only a handful of bottle glass and tobacco-pipe fragments accounting for the rest of the collection.

The Harvard Hall Midden: 1698–ca. 1765

Two later 18th-century midden levels also originated in the buildings facing Cambridge Common, but were located closer to the 18th-

century dormitories. These two middens were excavated during the 1992 Water Project, a monitoring and recovery project Stubbs undertook during water main construction. The impact area followed what had been a roughly north/south colonial lot boundary and fence line approximately 8 m behind (to the east of) Harvard's second-phase dormitories (behind Old Stoughton Hall). In the 2 m wide Water Project trench, at about 50 cm below the current land surface, archaeologists identified a substantial accumulated sheet midden next to Harvard Hall (Stubbs 1993: 59). The feature extended for 17.5 m (almost the full length of Harvard Hall's eastern façade). Occupation of this area of the yard started in 1679, but the siting of the midden indicated that it accumulated after Old Stoughton Hall was built in 1698. The absence of creamware in recovered collections indicates that this midden accumulated before the mid-1760s. The deposit therefore represents about 70 years of fill, from 1698–ca. 1765. These contents originated in the kitchen, buttery, chambers, studies, and storage in Harvard Hall (II); student rooms and wine/storage cellar in Old Stoughton (Bunting 1998: 21); chambers in Massachusetts Hall; and the oft-traversed spaces between.

Archaeologists recovered 2,060 fragments from the Harvard Hall Midden, excepting 129 fragments of architectural window glass, nails,

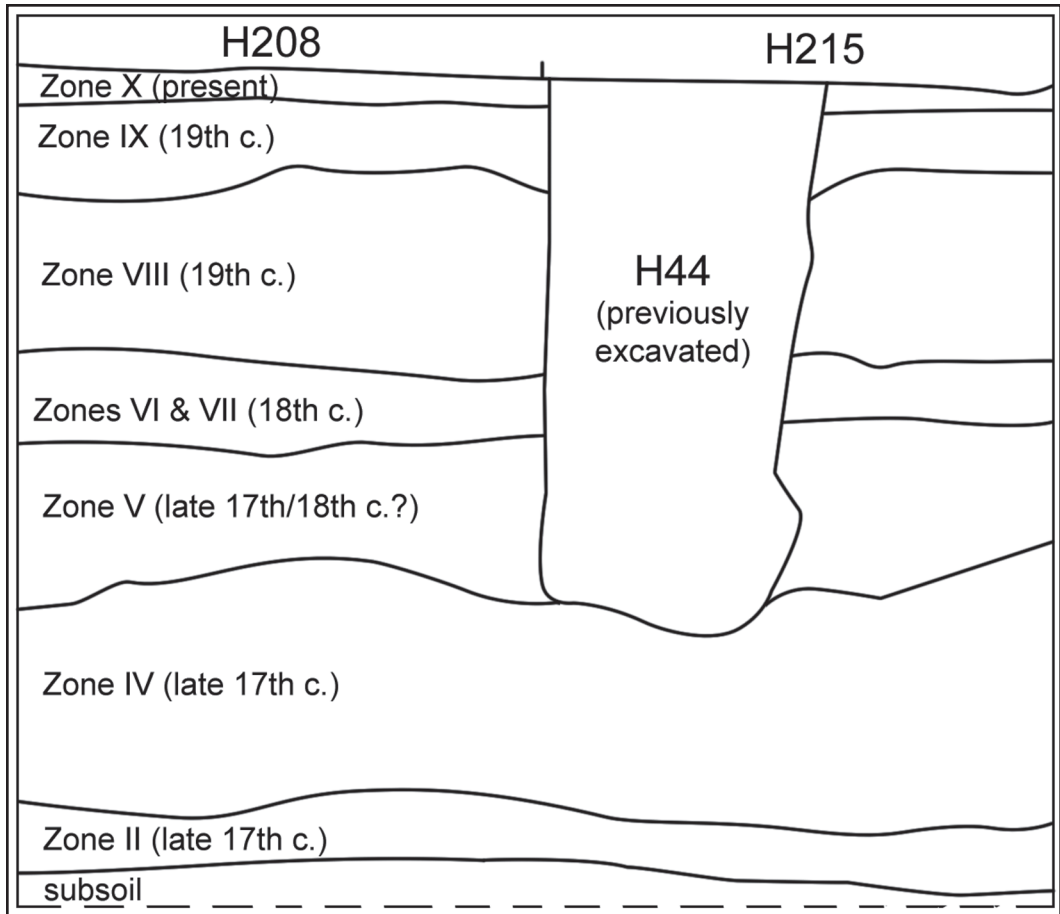


Figure 4. Old College cellar-hole profile of 1.5 × 1.5 m units H208 and H216 after Stubbs (1992: 411), showing Cellar Fill Zone IV (1677–ca. 1700), of interest to this study. Other 17th-century cellar fills include Zones II and V (Stubbs 1992: 400–402, 409). Zone II was the sandy cellar-floor surface and included minimal numbers of artifacts. Zone V was predominantly architectural remains with some late 17th-century and a few early 18th-century ceramics that may or may not be intrusive; for this reason it was not included in this study. (Figure by author, 2014.)

and spikes (brick was not kept or counted) (Stubbs 1993: 59). The author has completed a preliminary analysis of tea-related vessels (Hodge [2015]), and vessel forms will be analyzed in detail in a future project. Stubbs accounted for ceramic wares within this assemblage in his 1993 report. Brown and grey stonewares comprise 163 of the 237 utilitarian ceramics (69%), suggesting the storage of beer and semisolid foods. Redware and other coarse earthenwares (74 fragments) were about three times as common as tin-glazed earthenwares (21), and only 12 fragments of refined earthenware and 2 fragments of porcelain were recovered. Matched sets of ceramic tablewares were not

yet a regular part of student dining and drinking on campus—but wine was. No stemware was found, but the assemblage is dominated by glass wine and spirit bottles (535 fragments or 26%), as well as by tobacco-pipe fragments (774, 38%), suggesting that drinking and smoking were popular on campus.

The Massachusetts Hall Midden: ca. 1765–1785

The 1992 Water Project trench sampled another dense sheet midden south of Harvard Hall, adjacent to Massachusetts Hall. Like the Harvard Hall midden, the Massachusetts Hall Midden was encountered at roughly 50 cm

below ground surface. The two middens were not contiguous, however, but were separated by 18 m. Old Stoughton Hall, which stood at that location until 1780, evidently impacted trash deposition. The Massachusetts Hall Midden extended 20 m south in the Water Project trench. It was at its thickest (roughly 40 cm) adjacent to Massachusetts Hall and thinned to the north and south. The units of this midden had a denser concentration of artifacts than the Harvard Hall Midden, possibly because, by the time the Massachusetts Hall Midden was in use, the Old College cellar was no longer also used for trash. The Massachusetts Hall Midden yielded creamware, but no pearlware, providing a later (ca. 1765–1785) date than, but an artifact distribution similar to the Harvard Hall Midden nearby (Stubbs 1993: 50–55). The Massachusetts Hall Midden contents originated in Massachusetts Hall, Old Stoughton Hall (until it was dismantled in 1780), and/or the present (and final) Harvard Hall. Contents also may be from Hollis Hall, roughly 54 m to the north. It is expected, however, that trash would be dumped closer to the structure (Hodge 2013: 222). Some contents may have originated with the Continental Army, stationed on campus for eight months in 1775–1776. The majority of the fill, however, is assumed to result from roughly two decades of daily use by the Harvard community.

These archaeological remains illuminate college foodways in the generations immediately before and after the American Revolution. Ceramic tablewares are up slightly in this collection, to 8% from only 3% in the earlier Harvard Hall Midden; but so are utilitarian wares (8% to 12%). Refined ceramics increased notably, from only 4% to 31%, while utilitarian stonewares decreased from 53% to 18% (Stubbs 1993: 59). Continuing a pattern noted for the Harvard Hall deposit, the content of bone and shell is significantly reduced from that seen in the Old College Cellar Fill. While the cellar fill was 52% faunal, only 7% of the Massachusetts Hall Midden sample is animal bones. Future faunal analysis may help to explain this striking shift. It may reflect changing commons fare, or perhaps kitchen trash was segregated from student trash in the late 18th century. Of the 3,408 non-architectural

finds in the Massachusetts Hall deposit, nearly half—1,686—are glass wine-bottle fragments, and a few (12) pieces of glass stemware and tumblers were recovered. No glass tablewares were recovered in the two earlier deposits. One quarter of the Massachusetts Hall Midden collection is tobacco-pipe fragments (841). Future study will undertake nuanced chronological, functional, and typological analysis of these materials. What archaeology already makes clear, however, is that materialities of food shifted markedly between the late 17th and late 18th centuries.

Context Comparison

Several trends are apparent when artifact frequencies are assessed across these three features. Compared with the Old College Cellar Fill Zone IV (1677–ca. 1700), the later Harvard Hall Midden (1698–ca. 1765) yielded, proportionally, many fewer faunal fragments, more ceramics, and many more bottle glass and tobacco-pipe fragments. Artifact frequencies in the Massachusetts Hall Midden (ca. 1765–1785) continue trends noted in the Harvard Hall feature:

1. Ceramics, proportionally, remained steady, although there was a proportional increase in tableware vs. utilitarian wares.
2. There was a reduction in faunal remains, especially bone.
3. Archaeologists recognized a significant increase in bottle glass compared with the earlier Harvard Hall Midden, as well as an increase in table glass (not recovered in the Old College Cellar Fill discussed here or from the Harvard Hall Midden).
4. There was also a significant increase in tobacco-pipe stem and bowl fragments.

The appearance and prevalence of artifact types illuminates changing student foodways and consumer behaviors.

Tableware frequencies increased and faunal-remains frequencies decreased. This shift likely relates to dining styles changing from stews and pottages to individualized portions, noted in multiple studies of the period; and possibly to changing modes of procurement, from meat butchered onsite to market-bought cuts (Yentsch 1990; Landon 1996; Goodwin 1999). There is significant potential for future faunal analysis of these

collections. Drinking practices, in particular, changed dramatically over the course of the mid-17th through late 18th centuries. Despite the iconic role of beer in commons and sizing, finds suggest that wine played a crucial role in campus life by the last quarter of the 18th century. The timing and character of archaeological trends are not predicted by the documentary evidence. Rather, archaeology complicates the written record while illuminating material modes of social reproduction. By considering the documentary archive in light of archaeological findings, the buttery emerges as a place that simultaneously regulated (via controlled flows) and facilitated (via improvisational practices) subversive behaviors within emerging regimes of value.

Across the Hatch

Introduction

The acquisition of food and drink drew individuals through Harvard's spaces: from living chamber, to buttery, to hall, and back again (it was not the only practice moving people through the spaces of Harvard Yard; see Hodge [2013]). These locales were linked "arenas of acquisition" that functioned similarly to "overlapping landscapes of penal domination and inmate resistance" (Casella 2010: 92). The language of incarceration is too strong for a voluntary educational institution, but codependences of domination and resistance did define life within the Harvard community. Harvard's scheduling was scrupulous, and regulations exacting. The institution strategically produced a collegiate community by forwarding self-serving values (Certeau 1988: 35–36). For their part, students defied regulations surrounding food and drink (and everything else). The buttery is best understood not as a site of outright resistance, however, but of subversion. There, the overseers purposely allowed students some autonomy; for example, through the custom of individually purchasing breakfast and sizings. The buttery created an everyday "tactical space" where consumer opportunities forwarded disruptive values via alternative practices (Certeau 1988: xix, 36). These practices undermined institutional

authority by existing coincident to, but outside, the college's articulated rules and, in some measure, control. In the context of archaeological finds discussed above, a review of the material relations organized by the buttery market reveals the interplay of institutional control and individual desire at the early school.

The Butler's Domain

Like many collegiate spaces, the buttery merged institutional and domestic logics. Butteries had a long history in English great houses and universities as storage rooms for large barrels—or "butts"—of beer, a function originally distinct from pantries, dairies, cellars, and kitchens (Girouard 1978: 140). At Harvard, the buttery and the butler who managed it were formative components of undergraduate student life from 1650 through 1800. Although the butler reported to the college steward, who provisioned the buttery and kitchen both, the buttery was the butler's domain. His duties included "cleaning and supplying the Buttery, managing the inventory, manning the Buttery hatch during mealtimes, and keeping the accounts for purchases by students and tutors" (President and Fellows of Harvard University 2010). In compensation, the butler received tuition, a room, and, in later years, a fixed percentage of the buttery profit. The last strongly motivated the butler to manage his stock of goods creatively and to control his finances, as he triangulated between institutional ideals and student desires.

Like the buttery itself, the butler occupied a liminal position between students and the corporation. He was usually an older resident student working toward a bachelor's or master's degree (Morison 2001: 108). Beginning in 1650, the corporation directed the butler not to "Suffer any Schollarr" to "presume to thrust in to" the "Butteryes or Kitchen save with their Parents or Guardians or with some grave & sober strangers" (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 34); that is, the butler was supposed to prevent unsupervised students from accessing the buttery stock.

Clarifying the contributions of the butler and buttery to college culture, Timothy Pickering (Harvard College Class of 1763), later in life, described in great detail the distinct

yet intertwined experiences of dining at commons and shopping at the buttery:

Every scholar carried to the dining-table his own knife and fork. ... The standing dish was fresh beef baked,—now and then a plain, hard, Indian-meal pudding,—and a baked plum pudding once a quarter. For supper they had their choice, to enter for meat or pies, or for a pint of milk and size of bread ... The scholars ... provided their own breakfast in their chambers, and their tea in the afternoon. The south-east corner of the lower story ... was occupied by the butler; of whom were purchased bread, butter, eggs, and ... some articles which are now called groceries. But at the commencement of each quarter I carried with me from home, tea, coffee roasted and ground, and chocolate, to supply me for the quarter. (Pickering 1867: 9)

This record adds nuance to the archaeological finds, for example, of utilitarian German stoneware mugs and refined white stoneware cups. At the buttery marketplace, commodities like beer, cheese, bread, and milk—transported up to student rooms or delivered to tables at commons—were nodes linking individuals and spaces within a temporally ordered flow. In these ways, records of market debt, pecuniary fines, and community standing were conflated and entangled with discourses of status, surveillance, and consumerism within the buttery setting.

Supply and Punish

The buttery explicitly reinforced institutional strategies of control—in the sense used by Foucault (1995)—that were iterated through material, textual, and social means relevant to its role as a marketplace for food and drink. The butler kept “weekly accounts of students’ sizing, also keeping track of student absences from Commons, fines, and punishments” (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 149). The steward listed student names on the “Buttery Table,” a “notice board with the prices of sundries and the names of all Harvard students” (President and Fellows of Harvard University 2010). The buttery table stood in front of the buttery, facilitating communal surveillance. Expulsion resulted in one’s name being stricken from the table in front of the assembled school (Morison 2001: 112). This shaming not only suspended one’s “collegiate existence,” but also put a devastating “embargo on pudding, beer, bread, and

cheese, milk, and butter” (Hall 1851: 38). While materializing students’ membership in the Harvard community, the buttery table also ordered the students hierarchically, as names were listed by social rank and seniority (Morison 2001: 27, 104). Technologies of record, rank, and discipline were paramount, consolidated by and at the buttery.

Harvard’s market facilitated several forms of resistive action on the part of students. The butler kept track of disbursements made to individual scholars and other university members (Harvard University Butler 1722–1751). It was a record of unwarranted indulgence according to school authorities: Harvard’s 28 March 1650 orders bemoaned that “youngue Schollars to the dishonor of God hindrance of their studies & damage of their friends estate, inconsiderately & intemperately are ready to abuse their liberty of Sizing, besides their Commons” (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 32–33). In a further subversive act, students created their own barter economy outside the market system. The college responded with increased regulations, forbidding undergraduates from buying, selling, bartering, or exchanging anything among themselves above a minimal value (President and Fellows of Harvard University 1790; Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 142, 189). That this rule stayed on the books for so long—from 1642 to at least 1790—suggests the behavior was always feared and never eradicated. Thus, the buttery marketplace shaped practices of control and resistance, as well as surveillance and hierarchy.

Controlling Commodity Flow

College authorities welcomed and actively manipulated the college buttery to control students’ virtue by regulating their consumerism. The Buttery is (optimistically) described in an 1833 Harvard history as a place that

removed all just occasion for resorting to the different marts of luxury, intemperance, and ruin. This was a kind of supplement to the Commons, and offered for sale to the students, at a moderate advance on the cost, wines, liquors, groceries, stationary, and in general such articles as it was proper and necessary for them to have occasionally, and which for the most part were not included in Commons fare. (Hall 1851: 36)

This arrangement worked within a general logic of protective isolation, tracked clearly throughout 17th- and 18th-century incarnations of the College Laws, discipline accounts, and other internal college records (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a, 1925b, 1935; Morison 1935, 2001) (TAB. 2). Expanding on these themes, the mid-19th-century president of Yale University wrote

the original motives for setting up a buttery in colleges seem to have been to put the trade in articles which appealed to the appetite in safe hands, to ascertain how far students were expensive in their habits, and prevent them from running into debt; and finally, by providing a place where drinkables of not very stimulating qualities were sold, to remove the temptation of going abroad for spirituous liquors. (Hall 1851: 36)

This scheme played out, to a point, at Harvard. Students regularly sought out illicit stimulating drinks, and, at the buttery, some inevitably owed more than they paid (President and Fellows of Harvard University 2010). Records indicate that the buttery initially supplied only beer and bread (called “bever”). These items are the only buttery products mentioned in College Laws and Orders from the 1650s through the 1760s. In 1655, strong beer, wine, and inebriating drinks were not sold by the buttery and were forbidden in students’ chambers; students were not even supposed to go into taverns without their parents. Archaeological finds confirm the presence, but paucity, of wine bottles on campus during the 17th century.

Account books do not specifically list buttery goods until the 1720s (Harvard University Butler 1722–1751), when the surviving butler’s book provides an immediate, on-the-ground sense of what was being sold. The butler, and his customers, undermined institutional authority by working outside the College Laws, which did not list items allowed in the buttery until 1767. From the 1720s to the 1750s, the butler kept a much more varied stock than one would guess from student reminiscences (or from Harvard histories of the 1920s and 1930s, Batchelder 1921; Bevis 1936; and Morison 2001): biscuit, milk, spice, flour, eggs, sugar, beef, veal, veal tongue, pork, butter, sauce, cheese, carrots, turnips, loaves of bread, nutmeg, apple and cranberry pies, fowls, chocolate (sometimes

by the gallon), cabbage, pigeons, lamb, pears, peaches, raisins, pepper, vinegar, pickles, and salt pork (Harvard University Butler 1722–1751). According to his book, the butler also stocked and sold wine, but he did *not* sell distilled spirits like gin, rum, or brandy, either to students, tutors, or the college president.

The butler also did not stock popular, new-fashioned tea or coffee before the mid-18th century. This finding is surprising. Archaeological evidence demonstrates the widespread adoption of the tea ceremony by middling and upper-status groups in urban New England, even in the first half of the 18th century (Hodge 2009, 2010, 2014). It is also known through archaeology that, at Harvard, tea wares were used in the President’s House and in the dormitories during this period (Hodge [2015]). Coffee and tea were never explicitly forbidden by college laws, but they were not institutionalized until later decades. This shift apparently made little difference to the enjoyment of tea on campus, however (Hodge [2015]). Though absent from the 17th-century cellar fill, tea wares comprise 5.5% of ceramic fragments from the pre-1765 midden and 3.8% from the post-1765 midden.

Demographics, social norms, and cultural values in New England shifted significantly between the 1680s and 1730s (St. George 1988; Bushman 1992; Deetz 1996; Goodwin 1999; Breen 2004; Hodge 2014). So did material practices on Harvard’s campus, based on archaeological finds from the three-midden sample discussed above. The College Laws, however, remained unchanged between 1686 and 1734, when the overseers added considerable nuance and several new entries to existing regulations. These stipulations possess an exasperated tone. Leaving nothing to chance, the 1734 laws entreat students to “behave themselves blamelessly, leading sober, righteous, and godly lives” (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 495). For the first time, the laws stated that

no person of what degree soever residing in the College, Shall make Use of any Distilled spirits, or of any such mixt drinks as punch or Flip in entertaining one another or strangers. ... No undergraduate shall keep by him Brandy, Rum, or any other distill’d Spirituous Liquors.

Thus, the revised 1734 laws elaborated on illicit drinking and established a hierarchy of

Table 2. Chronological List of Buttery-related College Laws and Orders.

Year and source (citation)	Regulations relating to the Buttery and drinking
1642–1646 College Laws (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 24–27)	No buying or exchanging anything above a certain value.
1650 College Orders (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 27–35)	No taking of tobacco “unless permitted by ye President wth ye Consent of their parents or guardian, & on good reason first given by a Physician & then in a sober & private manner.” “Whereas youngue Schollars to the dishonor of God hinderance of their studies & damage of their friends estate, inconsiderately & intemperately are ready to abuse their liberty of Sizing, besides their Commons; therefore” no extraordinary Commons.
1655 College Laws (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 329–339)	No taking or bringing “strong beere, wine, or strong water, or any other inebriating drink” into chamber. No going into any “Taverne, victualing house, or inne to eat or drinke unless called by his parents.” 1655 meeting of the Overseers notes that they are looking into reports of “uncomfortable defects in the diet of the students.”
1667 Duties of the College Servants (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 45–48)	“The Steward shall deliver to ye Butler, his Bread... & shall deliver in his Beer.”
1674 College Orders (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 58, 60)	“Ordered that all the utensils of the Colledg belonging to the buttry & the Kitchen (and being inventoried in this book) doe abide as they are lodged in the Kitchin & Buttry. Only the plate to be brought to the presidents house and lodged in the Colledg desks or chest there.”
1681 College Orders (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 196–197)	Overseers ask the President to ask the parents and guardians of graduates not to provide more than one gallon of wine for students at Commencement. Also, the Senior Fellow is empowered to “take away all wine & strong drink where he feares any excess.”
1681 Overseers Orders (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 241)	No more than three gallons of wine for graduates, one gallon for other students, at Commencement.
1683 Corporation Order (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 75)	“Ordered, the the Butler shall, on ye account of his drawing of Cyder, have eighteen pence p Barrell allowed him” [annual allowance]
1686 Rules & Orders Respecting the Steward Cook & Butler (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 259–262)	Revision of the 1650 laws (President and Fellows of Harvard University 1790) “The Steward shall deliver in unto ye Butler his Bread... & his Beer” “Neither the Butler nor the Cook shall suffer any Scholar or Scholars Whatever ... to come into ye Kitchen or Buttry”
1686 College Laws (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925b: 848–850)	[In Latin.]
1692 College Laws (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935)	[In Latin, but translated in Mather’s <i>Magnalia Christi Americana</i> II; not relevant to the Buttery; in force until 1734.]

Table 2. Chronological List of Buttery-related College Laws and Orders. (*continued*)

Year and source (citation)	Regulations relating to the Buttery and drinking
1692–1697 (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 339, 356)	[In 1692, Corporation voted to use the Laws already governing the College.] [In 1697, Corporation voted to use the Laws already governing the College.]
1701 Corporation Order (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 367)	“Voted That No scholar shal Keep Cydar in his Cellar without Leave from the President or the Tutrs and Every Schollar herein trespassing shal forfeit his Cydar to the Colledg.”
1713 President and Fellows Meeting, Directions to the College Butler (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925b: 422)	<p>“Voted, That the Buttler... shal not sell his Cyder for more than 2d p Quart... That he shall allow the College 28d p Barrl for every Barrl of Cyder he takes into the Cellar for his own acct to Sell.”</p> <p>[In order words, whereas in the past the College was paying back the Butler a sum per barrel sold, now the Butler is paying the College per barrel stored; a reversal of power, in which he owes them, they don't owe him; and they control the price besides.]</p>
1722–1751 Butler's Book (Harvard University Butler 1722–1751)	<p>1725–1726 “College Debit for ye Corporation”: biscuit, milk, spice, flour, eggs, sugar, beef, veal, veal tongue, pork, butter, sauce, apple pie, cheese, carrots, turnips, loaves of bread, nutmeg, wine, cranberry, cranberry pie, turnips, fowls, gal. chocolate, cabbage, pigeons, lamb.</p> <p>1 June 1726: “Fellows treat for ye bachelors” (commencement): veal tongue, pork, butter, mustard, radishes, 4 gallons chocolate.</p> <p>1737: Also pears, peaches, raisins, beer, pepper, vinegar; details about how used/prepared: butter for ye pans, roast & boiled beef, roast pork, boiled fowls.</p> <p>1743: Plus pickles, salt pork. Molasses purchased for the President only.</p> <p>For individual students and tutors, sundries like ink case, pen knife, pins, ribbon, along with food stuffs.</p>
1727 (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 468)	President Benjamin Wadsworth diary: several students “publickly admonish'd in ye Hall, for drinking Rum (forbidden by ye College Laws).”
1734 (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 134–155; Peirce 1833: Appendix 125–143)	<p>The College Laws were thoroughly reviewed and amended in 1734, with considerable details added to existing laws and new laws put on the books. The expanded stipulations have an exasperated tone, as the College tried to force a thoroughly rebellious and dissolute student body to “behave themselves blamelessly, leading sober, righteous, and godly lives.”</p> <p>“If any scholar shall go into any tavern or victualing-house in Cambridge to eat or to drink there without leave” he shall be fined.</p> <p>“No person of what degree soever residing in the College, Shall make Use of any Distilled spirits, or of any such mixt drinks as punch or Flip in entertaining one another or strangers... No undergraduate shall keep by him Brandy, Rum, or any other distill'd Spiritous Liquors.”</p> <p>“The Butler shall have liberty to sell Cyder to the Schollars.”</p> <p>“No commencer shall have at his Chamber any Plumb cake, plain cake or Pyes, or hot meats of any sort except what is left of ye dinner in the Hall; or any Brandy; Rum, or any Distill'd Spirits, or composition made with any of them.”</p>

Table 2. Chronological List of Buttery-related College Laws and Orders. (*continued*)

Year and source (citation)	Regulations relating to the Buttery and drinking
1735 College Laws (amended) (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925b: 641–642)	“That ye Butler sell Cyder to ye Scholars for three pence per Quart, till ye first of February next, and four pence pr Quart from yt time to Commencement; and yt he pay one shilling to ye Steward for ye Use of ye College for every Barrel of Cyder yt he lays in.”
1767 College Laws (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384)	<p>No student shall “unnecessarily” frequent: taverns or victualing houses to eat and drink unless called by a Parent or Guardian.</p> <p>“No undergraduate shall go or send to any Innholder, or Retailer within three miles of the College for any strong Beer, Brandy, Rum, Wine or other spirituous Liquors, without paying immediately for the same or with a note endorsed by a Tutor. And no Freshman shall presume to fetch any of the said prohibited liquors without paying in full.”</p> <p>“The Buttery shall be supplied out of the College Stock & be furnished, as the Corporation shall order, with Wines & other Liquors, Tea, Coffee & Chocolate, Sugar, Biscuit, Pens, Ink & Paper & other suitable articles.”</p> <p>Breakfast was now included in Commons, and students were promised “there shall always be Chocolate, Tea, Coffee, & Milk for Breakfast, with Bread or Biscuit & Butter & Bread & Milk, Rice, Apple-pie, or something equivalent for Supper.”</p>
1772 (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384)	Amended to read: “The Buttery shall be supplied by the Butler [rather than out of the College stock] at his own expense with such Articles and under such Regulations As the Corporation from time to time shall order or allow,” giving the Butler more power and responsibility.
1777 (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384)	During the Revolutionary War, in 1777: Whereas “foreign articles are not to be procured without great difficulty and at a very exorbitant price, therefore the Scholars shall procure tea, Coffee, or Chocolate for Breakfast as well as the sugar and butter used with them.”
1784 (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384)	<p>“The Buttery shall be supplied by the Butler... with tea, Coffee, Chocolate, Sugar, Biscuit, Pens, Ink & Paper and such other articles as the Corporation or President shall order or allow; also with Cyder and such wines and other liquors as shall be permitted by the President or Corporation.”</p> <p>The quarter bill was printed and included 2 line items: “For wines & other permitted liquors” and “For other permitted articles.”</p>
1788 College Laws (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 368)	“The Buttery shall be supplied by the Butler at his own expense with Beer, Cyder, Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, sugar, Biscuit, Butter, Cheese, Pens, Ink, Paper, and such other articles as the President or Corporation shall order or permit. But No permission shall be given for selling wine, distilled spirits, or foreign fruits.”

alcoholic beverages, one that mirrored hierarchies of age and scholarly class (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 141–143). According to the butler’s book, the buttery supported this law by selling wine, beer, and cider, but no liquors to anyone. The archaeological prevalence of wine glass, but the absence of other identifiable types of bottle glass, in early to mid-18th-century

contexts indicates that these rules were honored more than they were breached.

The role of the buttery shifted in the mid-18th century. Around 1760, breakfast sizings were for the first time provided in commons in order to dissuade students from dining in town. In 1765, commons attendance became mandatory, surveillance assured (Hall 1851:

72–73). In 1767, the College Laws listed, for the first time, buttery commodities beyond bread, beer, and cider. They ordered that “[t]he Buttery shall ... be furnished, as the Corporation shall order, with Wines & other Liquors, Tea, Coffee & Chocolate, Sugar, Biscuit, Pens, Ink & Paper & other suitable articles” (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384). Coffee and tea—long present on campus—finally were integrated into the official system as “suitable articles.” Selling them on campus secured an important revenue stream for the butler and the college (except during the Revolution, when, due to high cost, “[s]cholars shall procure tea, Coffee, or Chocolate for Breakfast as well as the sugar and butter used with them” [Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384]). This revenue was not always easy to capture, however. At their 11 August 1777 meeting, the Harvard Corporation resolved that, in his accounts of student debt, the butler should “specify distinctly how much of the charge is for liquor and how much is for groceries” (President and Fellows of Harvard University 2010). This directive was an attempt to track student consumerism and further create an economy of virtue. Leaders articulated that, while the college supplied both food and liquor, these were conceptually distinct commodities, possessing different social implications and requiring different treatment within institutional regulations.

The permissive environment that began in the 1760s did not last. The 1788 laws ordered

the Buttery shall be supplied by the Butler at his own expense with Beer, Cyder, Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, sugar, Biscuit, Butter, Cheese, Pens, Ink, Paper, and such other articles as the President or Corporation shall order or permit. But No permission shall be given for selling wine, distilled spirits, or foreign fruits on credit or for ready money. (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1935: 345–384)

The laws further stipulated that the butler was not to recover debt “any farther than his future accounts are conformable to these regulations”; that is, for anything he sold that was not listed within the laws. These passages indicate that an enterprising butler improvised beyond the laws, selling liquor and fruit (likely for punch) to increase his profit. For the college, however, the anticipated disorder was

not worth the added income. Harvard’s foray into the ever-expanding world of consumer food and drink came to an end. The college reneged on customs in place since at least 1681, and in 1788 even wine was forbidden (Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a: 196–197). If it directly reflects student drinking, the striking prevalence of wine bottles in the ca. 1765–1783 midden assemblage may explain why.

Synthesis

Seventeenth-century Harvard limited the buttery to a lean list of essentials: beer, cider, and bread. Archaeological evidence from the Old College Cellar Fill Zone IV, dating 1677–ca. 1700, is similarly limited to faunal remains and utilitarian ceramics. From the 1720s to the 1750s, Harvard was deeply ambivalent toward wine and liquors. In the earlier part of the period, the school allowed these beverages only in moderation and on special occasions. Wine was sold at the buttery by the 1720s but was not sanctioned by the College Laws until 1734 (which still forbid “distilled liquors of any sort whatsoever”). Yet, wine bottles dominate the 1698–ca. 1765 archaeological assemblage at Harvard Hall, which also shows increases in ceramic types and forms, as well as evidence of other contested practices, like pipe smoking. In 1767, the laws caught up to student tastes, requiring that the buttery supply not only wine, but also “other Liquors, Tea, Coffee & Chocolate.” The Massachusetts Hall Midden assemblage dates from this newly permissive period (ca. 1765–1785), yet its artifact profile is strongly similar to that of the Harvard Hall Midden, which accumulated during less permissive previous generations, further suggesting that documents lagged behind practices (see also Yentsch, this volume). By 1788, however, in a return to the rules of the mid-17th century, distilled spirits and even wine were once again excluded from the buttery marketplace. Testing the effect of this ban on student practices awaits the identification and analysis of a post-1788 midden context.

In summary, close reading of the College Laws and comparison with archaeological remains and other documentary sources reveals:

1. A lag in the official sanction of new market practices, demonstrated through archaeology and other documents relating to the buttery commissary (especially the butler's record book, compared with College Laws and Orders). I believe this reflects the creative force of students' tactical, improvisational consumerisms (in the sense employed by Certeau [1988]); and
2. A marked increase in the official articulation of both sanctioned and forbidden buttery commodities over time. I believe this reflects responsive institutional efforts to control student consumerisms by articulating them, with increasing granularity, within an official archive. This maneuver transformed heterodox practices into orthodox ones.

I do not read the shifting College Laws as a relaxation of authority; the continued role of the buttery in institutional surveillance argues against that. Rather, I suggest changing laws allowed Harvard to (belatedly) assert authority, or attempt to reclaim it, by sanctioning pre-existing behaviors. The restrictions of 1788 suggest that this technique did not achieve the desired regulatory effect; that is, even when licit, student drinking did not support the sober and godly values the institution desired to inculcate.

Technologies of control at the buttery included direct and indirect surveillance (in the person of the butler, a proxy for higher university authorities), record keeping, and limits on the stock of goods. In Foucauldian terms (Foucault 1995), as students/goods flowed into and through the buttery, these codependent discourses worked to regulate student behavior and internalize institutional values of moderation and morality. Primed by Certeau's (1988) suggestion that strategies of institutional control are never total, however, it is found that students (including the butler) constantly pushed at the boundaries of licit behavior with strategic improvisations. It is through these consumer practices that material processes of identification and empowerment are revealed.

Conclusion

Harvard's material and documentary archives present both thicknesses (iterations and preoccupations) and frictions (contradictions

and ambivalences) around certain commodity practices, especially of drinking. Archaeology reveals lags and gaps within the documents: written regulatory discourse did not guide student practices, as much as respond to them. Documents, in turn, shift interpretive parameters of the archaeological archive. At most residential sites, something as mundane as a wine bottle would not be interpreted as subversive. At Harvard it might have been—or not, depending on how, when, and by whom it was purchased and consumed. Anecdotes of student resistance—in the form of outright rule breaking—are legion; for example, sending for, fetching, and drinking prohibited liquors; intoxication; and stealing others' tea, coffee, chocolate, beer, wine, and brandy (Harvard University 1725–1806, 1768–1880; Colonial Society of Massachusetts 1925a, 1925b, 1935; Morison 2001). In a particularly well-documented 1676 incident, several students, young women from the town, and an African servant were investigated for “nightwalking,” singing, dancing, and drunken parties (Harvard University 1676). I want to steer away from a simple licit/illicit paradigm, however. Rather, as the archaeological and documentary evidence detailed above demonstrate, the buttery provided a setting that enabled subversion and heterodoxy, as much as it fostered behavior and orthodoxy.

In this study of Harvard's buttery market, the late 17th and late 18th centuries emerge as transitional periods in relations between individuals and the institution. Dysfunction—poor commons fare, patchwork laws, misbehavior, the existence of the buttery itself—allowed alternative practical economies to emerge (Casella 2013: 93). Students improvised within systems of formally restricted agency (*habitus*), while the institution used/appropriated the market as an authorizing site and disciplining force. Iterative College Laws attempted to fix material boundaries of transgression. It is not surprising they were not followed; it is, perhaps, surprising that they do not track a steady evolution from Puritan asceticism to humanist luxury. Instead, per Certeau (1988), ambivalence, experimentation, and improvisation are found on the parts of the butler, students, and the institution itself. The integration of new commodities disrupted and shifted values at early Harvard, but the story is not a straightforward one.

This case study suggests four broader points about market studies:

1. It is worth considering the *longue durée* of consumerism, including institutionally restricted consumerism, even into the 17th century. Studies typically focus on later periods, especially the 19th and 20th centuries (e.g., De Cunzio 1995; Wilkie 2000; Martin 2008; Chicone 2011; Mullins et al. 2013). Consumerism is not only a “phenomena of modernity” (Majewski and Schiffer 2009: 192), but early modernity as well, and it should be studied as such.
2. Markets should be broached as social spaces, as physical concentrations of material goods, and as relational systems of practices and materialities.
3. The social role of any given commodity is highly contextual, and scholars need frameworks that integrate top-down frameworks with bottom-up practices.
4. The materiality of commodities extends beyond socioeconomic status, trade relationships, or even individual identity, and it is worth pursuing these further roles.

The Harvard College Buttery offers a well-defined setting in which to tease out how colonial markets gathered and directed flows of goods and people. Consumer sites offered opportunities for those in power to assert control over others’ practices, through community surveillance and the inculcation of shared values. Markets also provided both orthodox support and heterodox challenge to hierarchical relations.

As described above, Harvard’s buttry was a savvy, self-serving technology of social control. It made it easier for the college to influence student bodies and behaviors. It was a location of surveillance, and it telegraphed hierarchical status; yet it simultaneously encouraged collegiate concourse. It also (to an extent) neutralized unrest by supplementing meager commons, all while providing income to the college and the reigning butler of the day. As is so often true, the codification of behavior merely defined opportunities for challenge and improvisation along the margins. The instability just detailed was born of a paradox at the heart of Harvard’s market. Conformity was real and aggressively reinforced—but it cut against a hierarchical society where control was never total.

This study is part of a broader project, begun elsewhere (Hodge 2009, 2014), to rethink consumerism in early America using bottom-

up models that probe “fundamental tensions” between “external determinism and consumer agency,” rather than using economic, capitalist, or supply-driven models that favor top-down analyses (Mullins 2011: 64). This effort changes both the questions asked and the interpretations developed around foodways and consumerism. For example, commodity cost, style, and country of origin prove not especially helpful for interpretation at early Harvard (or perhaps anywhere; see Voss 2012 and Mullins et al. 2013: 635–640). Power and identity are better assessed through the ways market spaces, goods, and related practices organized relationships. The significance of a given commodity arises from its contextual role in organizing a “network of social relations” via lived experiences (see also Appadurai 1986; Preucel and Mrozowski 2010: 17). That Harvard’s internal market simultaneously structured institutional power and individual agency, domination and subversion, points to a fact of consumer studies: the same goods can carry different—even contradictory—meanings. This insight offers a unifying theme across diverse cultural, geographic, and temporal contexts of consumerism, and an endless field for critical interpretive study.

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